

WAC 197-11-960 Environmental checklist.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

Complete this checklist for nonproject proposals, even though questions may be answered "does not apply." IN ADDITION, complete the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D).

For nonproject actions, the references in the checklist to the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proposer," and "affected geographic area," respectively.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: **Walker Valley Trail Improvement Project**
2. Name of applicant: **Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Northwest Region**
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:
919 North Township Street, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284, (360) 856-3500
Contact person is Jim Cahill
4. Date checklist prepared: **January 8, 2007**
5. Agency requesting checklist: **Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).**
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): **Actual ground work to begin early Spring, 2007 and will be phased over the next two years.**
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain. **None planned at this time.**
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. **None known.**
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain. **None known.**

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

Hydraulics Project Approval (HPA) application will be required by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife for any regulated water crossings. Project element #1 and #3 of the proposal (see question 11 below) do not involve establishing any new water crossings. The intent for element #2 is to not cross any regulated waters as well, however, final trail locations may result in minor stream crossings. All regulated water crossings will be subject to HPA requirements.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

All project work will take place within the existing boundaries of the Walker Valley ORV Area. The proposal consists of 3 project elements: Element #1 consists of ½ mile (2500 ft.) of improvements to existing all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail and will include repair, relocation and rebuilding damaged portions of the trail system (see attached map for locations); element #2 involves the construction of approximately 3 miles of new connector motorcycle trail with the primary purpose of replacing trail lost due to conversion of trail to forest roads and to maintain an off-the-road system of motorcycle trails (as was the purpose of the original system of trails) to reduce the need for motorcycles to travel on forest roads to get from one section of trail to the next; and element #3 is the construction of approximately 2000 ft. of 5 foot wide 4x4 (jeep) trail that will emphasize skill building and user education. There will also be approximately 3000 feet of trail improvements along an existing 4x4 trail.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

Sections 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of Township 33N, Range 5E, WM in Skagit County Washington. See attached map.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous,
other **The terrain varies from valley bottoms to hilly areas to steep slopes.**

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?
40%

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland. **The soils are typical of a glacially influenced area, ranging from predominantly boulders to silty/clay consistencies; for example, project element #3 is generally dominated by large boulders above and below the natural grade.**

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Scars and debris deposits from some very old landslides remain visible in the Cultus Mountain area. Smaller scale shallow landslides plus soil and stream channel erosion are on-going, but less dramatic, processes. None of the elements of this proposal will be located on or near potentially unstable landforms. All trail construction will utilize existing trail design standards to reduce erosion and to disperse storm water from the trail system.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed.
Indicate source of fill.

The Walker Valley trail project involves minor excavation/clearing work. Approximately 100 – 200 cubic yards of material will be utilized for trail hardening and drainage structures: The approximately 2000 ft. of 4x4 trail will involve minor clearing of vegetation (the site consists of 8-10 year old conifer plantation trees) for vehicle staging at the upper part of the trail system (where the area is already flat and served as an old logging road) - no structures will be built. Most of the work will be focused on using the existing natural terrain and features such as logs, boulders and trees to create various skill level challenges – very little mineral soil will be disturbed (i.e. dug up, moved, regraded or excavated), the focus will be on enhancing what is existing and leaving it as natural as possible. These are to be trails (not roads) and will look very much like the trails that are already present in the area. Small quantities of crushed rock will be brought in as necessary to patch areas to supplement native sources of material. Concrete grass-grid pavers will be used on sections of the 2500 ft. of ATV trail to replace worn-out cement blocks. Grass-grid pavers and some gravel will be used to harden 3000 feet of existing 4x4 trail. The motorcycle trail to be built will range in width from 18 inches to 24 inches in width at the ground level (much like a hiking trail). The motorcycle trail will be built with hand tools with excavation limited to digging down to mineral soil. Some gravel and grid-pavers will be used where surface drainage structures are installed.

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Erosion during clearing and construction will be short term and limited to the immediate vicinity of the trail. While erosion from use is possible, properly maintained trail systems have very limited erosion impact.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

If crushed rock and grass-grid pavers are considered impervious surfaces, then less than 5% of the area will have impervious surface material. The vast majority of the project will retain native surfacing materials.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Trails will be constructed and reconstructed to meet the standards of the department's "DNR Design Standards & Construction Details, 1998" which are based upon "Standard Specifications for Construction and Maintenance of Trails" by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service – September 1996." One of the main objectives of these standards is to reduce the potential for trail erosion and its impacts to waters.

Examples of methods to control trail erosion on new and reconstructed trails include shaping trail tread, installing drain dips, water bars and other drainage features, trail surfacing, installing culverts and bridge replacement. Obliteration and rehabilitation of existing trails will include filling ruts, reshaping grades, installing water bars, using woody debris to block and camouflage trails, and revegetation where beneficial.

In addition to design considerations for controlling erosion, every effort will be taken to control erosion during construction. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, straw bales, filter fabric, temporary sediment ponds, check dams, and/or immediate mulching of exposed areas.

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

There will be limited engine exhaust and dust created by trail building equipment during trail construction. Off road vehicles currently emit engine exhaust at the site. This amount of emissions may go up or down slightly as a result of this project.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

None

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None

3. Water

a. Surface:

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Yes, the Walker Valley ORV area is a hilly landscape with numerous seasonal (Type 5) and some perennial streams (predominately Type 4 but a few Type 3 streams). Generally the greater ORV area drains through a system of Type 4 and 5 streams, to Pilchuck Creek that flows south to the Stillaguamish River near Arlington. The Northwestern part of the ORV area flows through Type 4 and 5 streams to Walker Creek. Walker Creek flows to Nookachamps Creek that then flows to the Skagit River near Burlington. In terms of water on or in the immediate vicinity of the project sites, the water bodies consist of Type 4 and 5 waters with no surface water involved for the majority of the project. See question 2 below.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

The project elements have been located to avoid work over, in, or adjacent to any waters. For example, the 4x4 trail project does not involve any water crossings. The ATV trail reconstruction will be adjacent to seasonal seeps, but no stream crossings. The motorcycle trail may include one or two water crossings but has been located to avoid as much water as possible. In all cases, regulated water crossings will be constructed with the benefit of an approved HPA (through the JARPA process) from Wa. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Approaches to all stream crossings will be hardened with grid pavers and/or crushed rock. Trail tread will be hardened where trails cross culverts that carry stream water. Hardened water humps and drain dips will be installed near streams to divert water to the forest floor.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

None

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. **No.**

- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

No

- 6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No

b. Ground:

- 1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve. **Does not apply**

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow?
Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Storm water runoff within trail corridors will be captured by water bars, water humps and other diversion features. This water will be diverted directly to the forest floor for natural filtration.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

All waste materials such as construction debris, silt, excess dirt or overburden from this project shall be deposited above the limits of flood waters.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

This project will be specifically designed to protect surface waters and is a priority goal of the project. Trail standards will be adhered to resulting in the smallest "footprint" possible. Impacts from runoff water will be controlled by a variety of methods including: shaping trail tread, installing drain dips, water bars and other drainage features, trail surfacing, installing culverts and bridge replacement.

Every effort shall be taken during implementation of this project to ensure that sediment-laden water is not allowed to enter streams or wetlands. These may include, but are not limited to, straw bales, filter fabric, temporary sediment ponds, check dams, and/or immediate mulching of exposed areas.

4. Plants

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:

- _____ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- _____ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other.. hemlock
- _____ shrubs: huckleberry, salmon berry
- _____ grass
- _____ pasture
- _____ crop or grain
- _____ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other.. devil's club
- _____ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- _____ other types of vegetation.. sword ferns

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Vegetation removal will be minimal. Trail location and work will be designed to minimize removal of vegetation.

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site. **None known.**

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Native plants will be used for re-vegetation of work sites outside the trail width.

5. Animals

- a. Circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

**DNR's TRAX System showed the following adjacent to the site:
Section 36, T34N, R5E Marbled Murrelet**

None of the following adjacent species are located within any of the project sites. However, several communities that are sensitive or unique to the larger geographic area were identified in the draft report, *Assessment for Fish & Wildlife Habitat and/or Issues*, January 2002. These included: a bald-like area, cliffs and talus fields, and other sites that require or may require protection by the WDNR Habitat Conservation Plan. Of special note is an area that contained a population of pika. It is somewhat of an anomaly to find pikas at such a low elevation (since they are so closely associated with talus slopes, which are more commonly found in more mountainous terrain, at higher elevations).

- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

The site is within the Pacific Flyway. The project will not have adverse impacts on this migration route.

- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

Those communities/areas identified in the draft report, *Assessment for Fish & Wildlife Habitat and/or Issues*, January 2002 as sensitive or unique, while not listed as threatened or endangered, will be protected by providing buffers from new trail construction to enhance wildlife habitat.

6. Energy and natural resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

Does not apply

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties?
If so, generally describe.

No

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal?
List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

None

7. Environmental health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal?
If so, describe.

No

- 1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

Does not apply

2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

Does not apply

b. Noise

1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

None

2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

There will be limited increases in noise levels created during trail construction and will occur during daylight hours. There is no anticipated long-term increases in noise levels.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

None

8. Land and shoreline use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

In addition to recreational activities, the site is currently managed by WDNR as industrial forest land. Adjacent properties uses include commercial forestry and low density single-family residential developments.

b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

No

c. Describe any structures on the site.

There is a developed trailhead that is not part of the proposal but is part of the overall ORV riding area with a small picnic area and two vault toilets.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Industrial Forest-Natural Resource Lands

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Industrial Forest-Natural Resource Lands, in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Does not apply

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

No

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

None

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

None

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

Does not apply

- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

The proposal is compatible with the existing zoning designation of Industrial Forest. This proposal will not result in a change in land use. The projected land uses under Skagit County's comprehensive plan for the subject area are to remain the same – which emphasizes commercial forestry and uses which are compatible with commercial forestry such as the 33 year old Walker Valley ORV area.

9. Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

None

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

None

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

None

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

Not applicable

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

None

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: **None planned.**

11. Light and glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

None

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

No

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

None

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

None

12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Designated recreational opportunities:

- ☐ **Multiple-use trails (primarily managed for off-road vehicle use)**
 - ☐ **Off-Road Vehicle Use**
 - ☐ **Motorcycle**
 - ☐ **All-terrain Vehicles**
 - ☐ **Short-wheel based 4-wheel drive vehicles**
- ☐ **Recreation mineral lease**
- ☐ **Established day-use area that provides**
 - ☐ **Picnic area**
 - ☐ **Restroom facilities (2 vault toilets)**
 - ☐ **Fire rings**
- ☐ **Disabled hunting access**

Informal recreational opportunities:

- ☐ **Dispersed camping**
- ☐ **Mountain bicycling**
- ☐ **Equestrian trail riding**
- ☐ **Hiking**
- ☐ **Dispersed picnicking**
- ☐ **Hunting**

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

This project will provide for continuation of current recreational opportunities in the immediate vicinity. No existing recreational uses will be displaced.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

The project will have a net result of increasing the quality of user experience and safety, while mitigating current environmental impacts and maintenance requirements.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

DNR's TRAX System showed no cultural resources on or adjacent to the site.

b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

Portions of some of old railroad grades are being, and will continue to be used by ORV's.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:
None

14. Transportation

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

State Highway 9, Lake Cavanaugh Road, Walker Valley Road, and Peter Burns Road will be used to access ORV area. See vicinity map.

b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?
No.

c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?
Does not apply

d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).
No

e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.
No

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

This project is not designed to increase use of the area. However, it is possible that use may increase marginally as trail conditions are improved.

g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:
Does not apply

15. Public services

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

It is not anticipated that this project will increase user visitation levels. Therefore, it is unlikely that there will be an increase in need for public services.

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

None. However, there is the potential that as we increase the user safety impacts on public services, primarily emergency medical services, will be reduced.

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.

Two vault toilets are provided at the Walker Valley Trailhead

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity, which might be needed.

Does not apply

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature:

Date Submitted:

1/11/07